

Guide to your Period

The menstrual cycle includes not just your period, but the rise and fall of hormones and other body changes that take place over the month. At first, your periods may not be regular; you may have two in one month, or have a month without a period at all. Periods will become more regular in time. This sample guide is based on a 28-day cycle, but your cycle could be as short as 23 days or as long as 35. The number of days your period lasts also varies. Every woman is different.

Days 1/2 Your period begins and the flow is at its heaviest. You may have cramps or stomach pain.

Days 3/4 Your body removes the rest of the tissue in the womb.

Days 5/6/7 There is still some blood, but the cramps should be over.

Days 8/9 The bleeding and pain are over, and your face begins to clear up (yeah!).

Days 10/11/12 Your body should feel great!

Days 13/14 Ovulation happens around this time (some women have cramps, but you likely won't feel a thing when you ovulate).

Days 15/16 Hormone levels rise, helping to keep your body strong. At the same time, your breasts may be tender.

Days 17/18/19/20 Your hormones are shifting, which can cause any or all of these symptoms: bloating, tender or sore breasts, moodiness, and cramping. You may feel very emotional during this phase, but many young women do not have pain or mood changes at all.

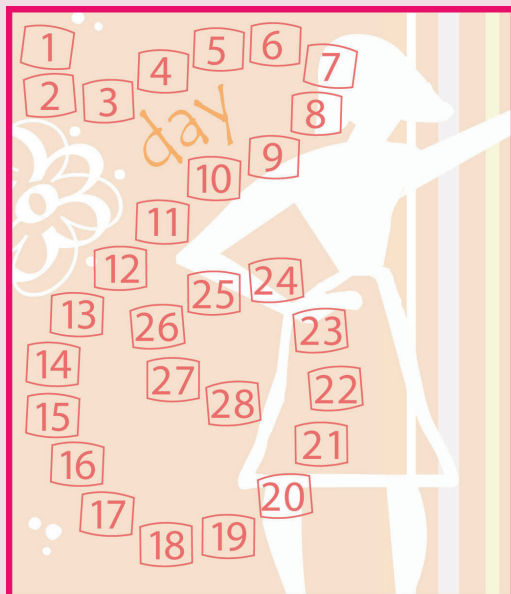
Days 21/22 A drop in hormone levels can cause you to feel tired and you may feel like you need more time alone.

Days 23/24 If you have PMS (premenstrual syndrome), you may have any or all of the following symptoms: mood swings, crabbiness, worries about things that may not be that important, a lack of interest in your usual activities, sleepiness, breast pain, bloating (an uncomfortable feeling that your stomach is bigger), headaches, cravings for certain foods, and trouble focusing.

Days 25/26 Important hormones are at very low levels, so you may have even stronger PMS symptoms.

Days 27/28 This is the end of the menstrual cycle, and your hormone levels have gone way down. The lining of your womb gets ready to be shed during this time and your body prepares to start the cycle again. Most women have cramps during this time, which can let you know that your period is about to begin.

To learn about your own pattern or schedule, it can help to keep track of your periods on a calendar. Turn this over for the GirlsHealth cycle calendar!



Check out the interactive version on-line at www.GirlsHealth.gov

**For more information on staying healthy and changes
in your body, visit www.GirlsHealth.gov!**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health

GirlsHealth Cycle Calendar

October 2005						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

November 2005						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December 2005						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

January 2006						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2006						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March 2006						
S	M	T	W	TR	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

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